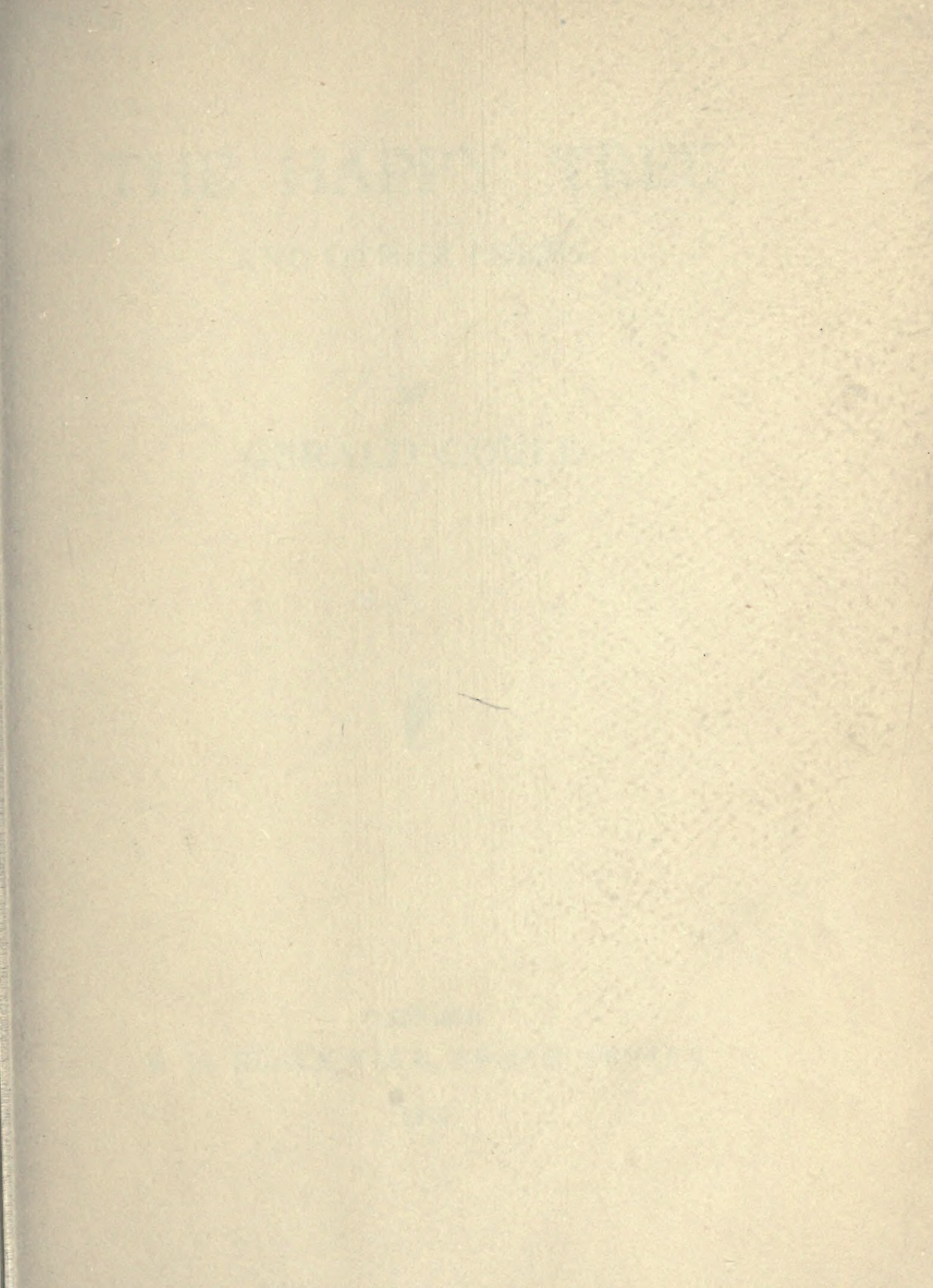
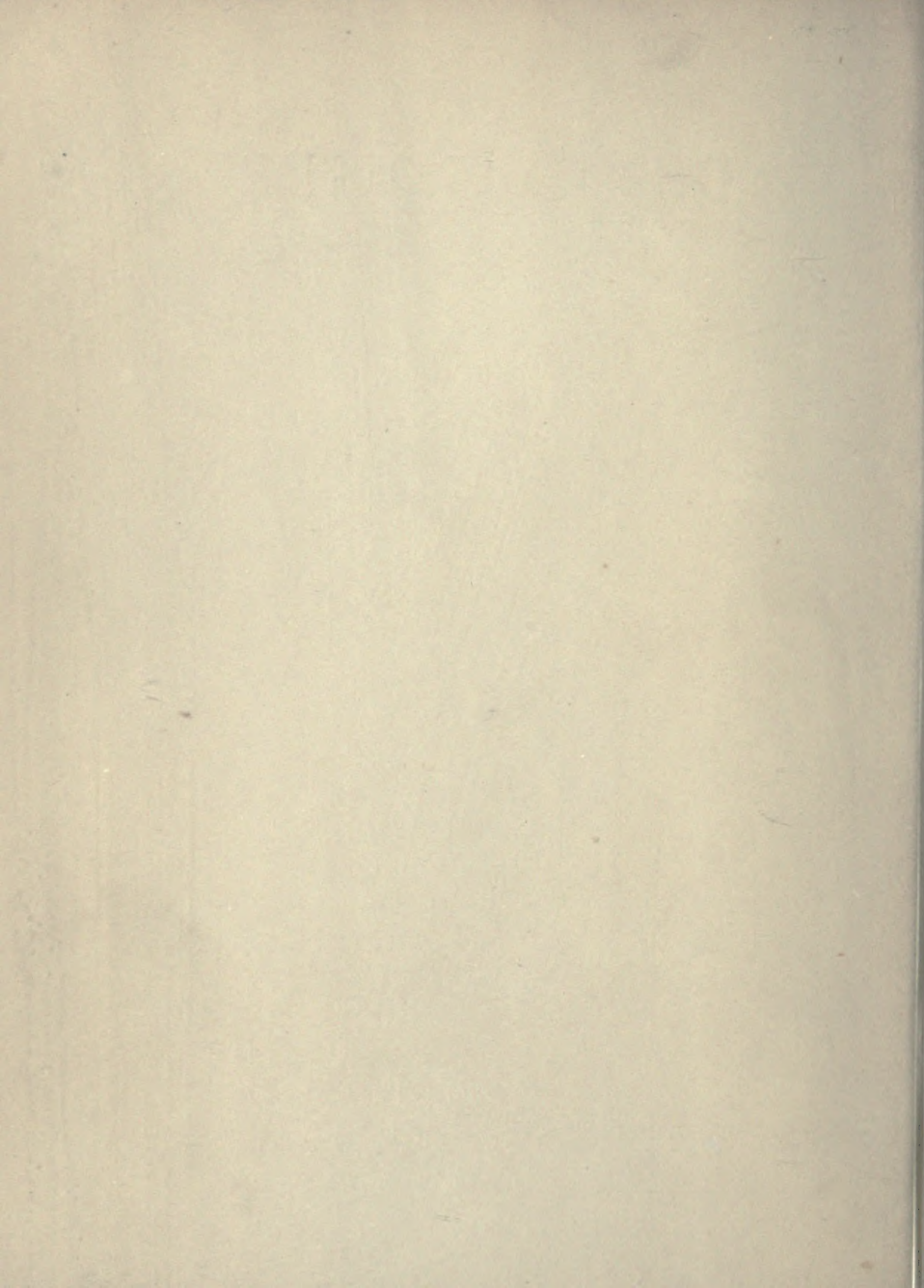


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THE HAPPY TREE

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

GERALD GOULD



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OXFORD

B. H. BLACKWELL, BROAD STREET

1919

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

LYRICS

AN ESSAY ON THE NATURE OF LYRIC

POEMS

MY LADY'S BOOK

MONOGAMY

THE HELPING HAND

To the Memory of Friends fallen in the War.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

MOST of the pieces in this volume have already appeared in periodicals (I have to thank the Editors of the *New Statesman*, the *Cambridge Magazine*, the *Herald* and the *Daily Mirror* for permission to reprint). No. III was written after a visit to some hospitals in France, and was called *Base-Hospital*: it was subsequently published as *A Prayer for Peace*, but is given here under its original title.

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PRELUDE OF FAITH AND LOVE

JUDGE not of me by my own deeds : the light
That has illumined my terrestrial night
Is stronger than my weaknesses are weak,
And that clear utterance has a thing to speak
Which not the silence of deep earth or sea
Can drown from them whose love is loved by me.
Cradled in sudden peace—as distant swings
An eagle in the cradle of its wings,
Golden 'mid golden air—I hear below
The winds of peace according as they flow,
And peaceful winds about me, and above
The music of the moving winds of love.
—Never again, perhaps, my sense shall seize
Such hopes, such ardours, or such dreams as these :
Lost, it may be, in griefs of my own mind
And the self-torturing madness of mankind,
I shall forget—but ah, forget not, you
Whose eyes have shone on truth and found it true !
You comrades, you free fighters, you whose spirits
Each generation from the last inherits
As the sole substance of its forward dream :
You whose linked hands, across the senseless stream
Of the material ocean, still sustain
A world of mangled body and sick brain :
You, for whose golden thought the future delves

—Who, guessing one another, know yourselves !
Once, if but once, since the retreating fires
Of innocence left me bare to base desires,
I have glimpsed, have guessed, have known, have
 touched, have told,
The early quiet and the morning gold
—Have trod the places where our tumult ends,
And joined the shining company of friends.
Now the bad earth recalls me : now I sink
Once more to thoughts I am ashamed to think,
All things wherefrom the free soul stands exempt
—Dark fear and dark desire and self-contempt :
I loose my hold of silence and of song,
And join the ragged ranks where I belong ;
Mix with the crowd of them that shun their fates
—Poor, pitiful souls, that are my natural mates !
Ah, how regain the morning, how control
The lost, the hunted and the haunted soul,
Save by the light, the peace, that made me see
Ev'n in the slave the spirit of the free
—Ev'n for *my* sake my Master sacrificed,
And, on the harlot's brow, the kiss of Christ ?
Dear brothers, sisters, hating your own hearts
Because you find it hard to bear your parts,
Christ in the Garden knelt on common grass
To pray that from *his* lips the cup might pass.

POEMS WRITTEN IN WAR TIME

I

THE HAPPY TREE

THERE was a bright and happy tree ;
The wind with music laced its boughs ;
Thither across the houseless sea
Came singing birds to house.

MEN grudged the tree its happy eves,
Its happy dawns of eager sound ;
So all that crown and tower of leaves
They levelled with the ground.

THEY made an upright of the stem,
A cross-piece of a bough they made :
No shadow of their deed on them
The fallen branches laid.

BUT blithely, since the year was young.
When they a fitting hill did find,
There on the happy tree they hung
The Saviour of mankind.

II

FOR A FRIEND KILLED IN BATTLE

OTHERS will weep for him, but I
Have not a tear to give :
My tears are not for them that die,
But all for them that live.

O hopes that others seek—and miss !
O needs past help or cure !
The dawn for him perpetual is,
And chance, for him, is sure.

What sense of things too good to stale
Made the long years refuse
His strength, that now will never fail,
The youth he cannot lose?

Bright-browed he was and bright of limb,
And to high purpose wed.
What more could life desire for him
Than to be young, and dead?

III

BASE-HOSPITAL

IN the unhappy ward,
As clean as Heav'n—where but one faint sweet smell;
Where but the languid slowly-turning eyes
Of them that never again will wake from Hell,
That never will be brave again, nor wise;
Where but the torn limbs and the harshly-scored
White faces of the uncomplaining dying
Proclaim the trade that the mad world is plying—
I stand and, looking round,
Find the walls yield
Before my fancy's hideous flight:
I see the long lines of the sodden field,
I hear continuous and tumultuous sound,
And warring Europe rises on my sight,
Battalion on battalion, like the sweep
Of wings that trouble sleep
—Like the unintermittent clang and sob
Of clouding crowding wings that climb to rob
The skies of light,
That make a torment of the day and night
—Wings that are black, the wings of fear, and wings
Red as the blood of any mother's boys
—Shrill wings, blaspheming with their brazen noise

The memory of happy quiet things :
Till the world shows a wanton wasteful place,
Beneath that vast derision and disgrace,
And all the pleasant rivers as they run
Are thick with swollen bodies, all the jets
Of clear bright air
Shine like the chilly glitter of bayonets,
And all the smoking cities breathe despair ;
And ever louder on my ears
The screams beat, the thunders beat,
Frightened voices, hurrying feet,
The crying of dying men, the strangled fears
Of violated girls that pant on death,
The insolent triumphing overmastering breath
Of guns calling to one another,
Giant brother challenging giant brother,
Loud and loud,
Drowning the fevered clamour where armies crowd,
Drowning the wail where little hamlets burn,
Each terrible mouth in turn
Throwing on fiery air its voice of fire,
Till, in that mingled and reverberate scream,
The sense goes dead, like sleep without a dream,
Or, scarcely dreaming, feels
Lost to fear, lost to desire,
Lost to the whole scope of things,
Save that deadly beat of wings

Always wider spread and always clouding higher.
So might a man, amid the shouting wheels
Of some vast factory that made
The implements of devils' trade,
Be, of a sudden, deaf; and on his ears
Might fall the oldest of our human fears,
Silence—and still up the dark vaults would beat
Pulley and belt, and still about his feet
The furnaces of Hell would redly burn,
And all the dreadful wheels in silence turn.
Ah, otherwise than from our palsied birth
Must he be born who, ere life's busy soul
Of its great voyage reach the sum
And know the whole,
Might yet, unwearying in adventure, come
To the sheer verge of unpropitious earth,
And find below him the thin waves gone dumb
With distance, and perceive how little worth
His long endeavour, and yet be well content
At this wide noon of his enfranchisement,
And, lonely, know the fellowship of the wise,
And stand and see the still-recurring streams
Of the clear ocean with remembering eyes,
Preoccupied with silence, dim with dreams.
What place for dreams is here,
Save nightmare loss of what in dreams was dear?
What calm high place for such

As understand,
When all vile Nature puts to the one touch
All the world's work of head and heart and hand?
For some there be that give
The moment of their best,
Take hold on life, and live,
Or die, and rest;
But others shall the slow death-dealing ways,
That deal not quite death's mercy of the end,
Strip of health and hope and praise
And lover and friend:
In some, whose sudden business is to die,
Red life perhaps until the end runs high;
But some the flesh betrays
To long-laborious and inglorious days
And heavy useless loads;
Their feet are trammelled from the ardent roads,
Their hands from triumph and their eyes from light,
And scarce a star is wasted on their night.
Nay, there be they
Whom deeper treacheries betray
—Who, in the tortured stress,
Have laid vain hands on vanishing happiness,
And are left naked to the streaming storm!
—But one and all alike
The wandering terrors strike,
And the world's heart itself no more beats warm.

Some in the flesh, some in the spirit fail,
And who shall take up the ironic tale,
Or judge where spirit ends and flesh begins
In this mad rout of sufferings and sins?
Not for ourselves—not any for his mere
Salvation at this moment dares to pray :
All know the pain of all is more than they,
And each for other prays—but who shall hear?
For all the lands pashed to a bloody dust
Beneath the heel of this insane mistrust
By a few maniacs' lust;
For all the hopes tossed bleeding to one tomb;
For all the babies butchered in the womb;
For all the virgin dreams—made red with shame
By every subtle wrong without a name!—
For all the mothers that expectant feel
The stir within them of the coming child
With whom the world's hope lies
—Poor women, destined haply to the wild
Midwifery of hurtling steel.
Where that great cloud of wings makes loud the skies!—
For all the souls torn on the senseless wheel,
For all that lives to-day, and all that dies
—Smash, smash the monstrous engine, break the
sword,
With one cold breath destroy the thing abhorred—
Give peace, give peace, peace in our time, O Lord !

IV

ALIEN ENEMIES

(The German mother speaks to the English mother)

ON the cold frontier-line of death
I won my man-child blood and breath :
At a great price, in gulfs of night,
Purchased the morning for his sight,
And in a silence big with fear
Fore-wrought the musics he should hear.

And you?—ah, who should know but I
The wings of death that beat so nigh,
The deathly dark, the deathly dews,
The soul that will not yet refuse,
And all you risked, and all you paid,
When out of you your son was made?

Your son and mine in love were bred,
Your son and mine in hate are dead,
Yet never hated, never knew
The sense of what they had to do,
But perished, brother slain by brother,
Who might as well have loved each other.

The happy hands, too good to put
To the red business of the brute;
The candid eyes that death's release
Found peopled with the dreams of peace;
The hope beneath my heart that grew—
Ah, who should know them if not you?

Dear mother of a murdered son,
Ours is the end by us begun!
Ours is the strength the drums called up,
And ours it is to drink the cup
Of childless days, of childless years,
Salt with the taste of blood and tears.

Dear murdered mother!—still to die
The women's regiments go by:
No music of the march for them,
And for their souls no requiem,
When, 'mid the screaming of the guns,
The mothers perish in their sons.

And we are foes, or so they tell me—
But in the wonder that befell me,
When, solitary soldier, I
Fought for the life so soon to die—

When out of night I brought, I won,
My morning-star, my little son—
When at the utter risk and cost
I gained the solace I have lost—
When underneath my opening eyes
Lay that which now all altered lies—
When to my warm and passionate breast
I held the limbs now cold in rest—
I knew one peace that shall not end,
And every mother for my friend.

V

NOVEMBER 11TH, 1918

(In Memory of the Dead Soldiers of all Nations)

TIME brings us peace, but others
Have found their peace before.
Time brings us peace : our brothers
Wait upon time no more.
The wind of healing wanders,
And soon the corn shall dance,
Above their graves in Flanders,
Above their graves in France.

Their simple faith unswerving
Asked neither proof nor praise :
They judged their God worth serving,
They judged not of his ways.
Ev'n if the goal they tried for
But mocked them as they fell,
They found the faith they died for,
And surely all is well.

Lo, Mother Earth, uniting
Her children!—Undescried,
Here died the Briton fighting,
And here the German died:
And who shall now dissever
Or set their dust at strife?
They are friends in death for ever
Who kept their faith with life.

All peoples in one passion
Have given life for love,
And we but live to fashion
What they died dreaming of.
To bring this bright November
Time's four worst years have bled:
Brothers, to-day remember
Our brothers who are dead!

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

I

SLEEPLESS

HERE in the silence of my room
I hear the dragging wheels of doom,
And the long pain of human plight
Hums like a taut wire in the night.

Inside my breast I feel the knock,
The ticking of the timeless clock,
And find beneath my eyelids furled
All the dim business of the world.

Somewhere in that dull tumult dies
My comrade, neither brave nor wise,
Spendthrift, with only dreams to spend—
My friend, who might have been my friend!

Unhappy, uncompanioned—here,
At least, your dear desire is dear,
And leaves untroubled by its spark
No thin vibration of the dark.

I did not know you, but I knew
The sweet dubieties of you:
Ah, who but I should understand
Tentative foot and groping hand?

Into the dusk you take as much
As what your daytime could not touch,
And mortal twilight folds above
A twilight of immortal love.

Could but you know how close I cleave,
That faith would make your doubt believe—
Make brave your spirit with bright breath
Ev'n to the taint and taunt of death.

Apart we were, apart we are :
Too faint the message and too far :
Lonely began and lonely ends
The journey of the friendless friends.

Yet in the tangle and the blur
My heart's your heart's interpreter :
Unknown, unknowing, you and I
Together lived, together die.

II

I WOULD not love you—yet I love
All things that you are fashioned of
—The shining curl of April cloud
—The April waters, never loud,
Where lurks, as music lurks in strings,
The babble of maternal springs
—And vivid, subtle, misty, clear,
Swift to appear and disappear,
The April moon that through young skies
Silver and solitary flies.

Your body, like an innocent sleep,
Holds all its shining dreams too deep :
Not your own soul, perhaps, can guess
Your sudden heart's uneasiness :
Not your own heart, perhaps, can know
The road your soul's adventures go :
Yet somehow soul and heart are wise
Each with the other's harmonies,
O wise and beautiful and kind,
O body milk-white as your mind !

I would not love you—yet on me
Your beauty thunders like a sea
(Still beauty, quiet, deep-withdrawn,
Dressed in the quality of dawn,
Yet thus to drench and drown my sense!)
O sweet omnipotent impotence,
Melodious silence, burning dusk,
Too tender core of tender husk!
—Can it, dear soul of truth, be true
That, loving these, I love not you?

III

ILLUSION

I AM so near to you that now
The soft hair waved across your brow
Lies like a kiss against my cheek :
I am so near that when I speak
My quick words are not words so much
As a queer troubled kind of touch,
And what I say is understood
Not by your brain but by your blood :
I am so near that now at last
The crowding inarticulate past,
The innumerable things I knew
At once when once I met with you,
Yet did not know, but kept apart
Blindly from my heart and your heart
For fear, for doubt, for ignorance—
The moods our meetings made, the trance
That any sudden vision of
Your coming put about my love—
The pledge you gave me in your thought,
The pain my pitiful pleasure bought,
The loud voice that between us cried
Not plain enough to be denied,
But in its urgency content

To say all save the thing it meant—
These now because I am so near
At last I tell, at last you hear :
And knowledge in your look awakes
As breathless as a morning breaks ;
You half hold back to hear me speak
Lest my touch told you lies : my cheek
Still feels your soft warm hair's caress :
Your lips half tremble in distress,
Then smile : and peace is perfect while
I watch the calm remembered smile
That from the first I loved for yours—
That from this moment on endures
As never in the past it did,
For always then there lay scarce hid
In your simplicity of mirth
Sorrow not simple, and a dearth
Baffling my thirsty eyes that took
So much from your bright careless look :
Now, now perfection full and fine
Seals that pure smile for ever mine :
O hush ! O peace ! when close and whole
The long adventure of the soul,
Searching, aware now more, now less,
Is havened into happiness.

* * * *

And all this time, afar, apart,

You do the business of your heart
That's not my heart's concern : just now,
Your soft hair waved across your brow,
You waste, perhaps, your peaceful look
Over the pages of a book :
Absorbed to that one task you bend,
You turn the leaves, you reach the end :
Complete, content, as far from me
As one sea from another sea,
Not guessing how in thought too dear
I burnt so infinitely near,
Nor how, once that dear thought is fled,
My world goes round me vague and dead.
I thank God you have never known
That I am always so alone.

IV

TO A CHILD

POOR little pinafores frightened thing,
It does not need your whispering
(Reedy and queer with sobs suppressed!)
To tell me why you left the rest
Who still are running and calling there
Through the clear quiet summer air
That just begins to darken over
Rough gorse-smells and sweet crushed clover
And the faint piercing waft of hay :
What chance for childish lips to say
How the grey world made your soul grey,
And wrapped you round and drew you apart,
And with sad beauty hurt your heart?
—How the thin bosom that you press
(Unglobed beneath the crumpled dress!)
Ached, ached with terrible loneliness,
Because the others through the grey,
Shadowy things at shadow-play,
Sounded suddenly far away?
—Children's voices, calling, calling,
Lost, like stars for ever falling!
Children's voices, busy and free,
Lost, like time in eternity!

—What chance for the childish lips to snatch
Words that should fix the lifted latch,
Call back the dream through the closing door,
And snare the shadow on the floor?—
O it is hard to have so much
To ease the breaking heart of—such
Black need for speech, and no speech clear!
—Shall I tell you a secret, dear?
There *are* no words for heart-break: so
You cannot tell me. But I know.
(Dear God, how deep there lurks in each
One ancient wrong past help of speech!)
—Hush the sobs and the broken words,
Hush them home like evening birds,
Rest your heart and rest your head,
Leave unsayable things unsaid,
Accept the silence, come to me,
Curl up tight upon my knee,
Tuck your legs in, let your hands
Grip the friend who understands,
Let him kiss the poor wet eyes,
Let *his* lips heal *your* lips of sighs,
Just be peaceful, just be still,
Hush your memory, hush your will,
Nestle in love too safe to fail—
And I will tell you a fairy tale.

V

A MEETING

WHAT, you did always love me,
And never told me so?
Kept silence just to prove me,
And, the proof wanting, simply let me go?

And hence your life miscarried,
And every night you weep?
And I—well, I am married,
And have the better reason not to sleep.

My tone sets your wound smarting?
No need!—I'll tell you why
(Since here's another parting)
—*My reason is the same as yours.*—Good-bye.

VI

ONE HUSBAND TO HIS WIFE

DOUBTING wife,
Come a little nearer :
Tell me clearer
What you want of life !

More than twice
What I have to give you?
'Live, let live' you
Count a poor device.

Very well,
Make a fresh beginning !
But old sinning
Fashions a new hell.

What is past
Turns the future bitter :
It were fitter
To be free at last.

Go your ways,
Break the bond that binds us !
Thus God finds us
Better worth his praise.

Yes—but you
Are not, so, contented.
We've repented;
Let us try anew.

Well, once more!
—Only, I recall that
We've had all that
Several times before.

VII

ANOTHER HUSBAND TO HIS WIFE

Was this a fear, that in our mingled breath
Shook for a pulse's beat, or seemed to shake?
A pause between two doubts, that sleep and wake :
Between two certainties, of life and death?
Was it a cloud on love's clear glass—a wraith,
Unhappy, of forgetting and mistake?
Ah no! this shadow was for beauty's sake,
And, if a doubt, the doubt that flowers in faith.

Behold the restless heart of love!—the strong
Made weak by morning star or evening bell :
White light so full of colours, and the spell
Of time, that works eternity no wrong!—
Only the silence understands the song,
And only song the silence. All is well.

VIII

THE SENSUALIST

NEVER the same again, my dear!
—Try all your arts, and feel them fail;
You have dropped the weapon that was fear
And use has made occasion stale;
But try them, try them—try the touch
That turned my blood to aching fire
—Only to find it only such
As digs the cold grave of desire.

I would not have you weep for this
—And yet, what matter if you must?
A tear's as chilly as a kiss
When both are fed with thankless dust:
If I could grieve to see you weep,
Perhaps my grief might lure above,
From silence that is more than sleep,
The ardour that was less than love.

IX

NEUROTICS

I HAD a vision of how the earth
That since its strange and whirling birth
Dimly, dizzily, spins and races
Through the racing, spinning spaces,
Came to a monstrous stop; the jar
Shook the course of sun and star
And made the world irregular.
There came a shout of thunder greater
Than any a bubbling boiling crater
Flourishes in the face of night;
There came a falling sheet of light
To stun the ears, to make the mind
Empty, and the sense blind :
Vivid chaos shone dismayed
With violent fountain, bright cascade,
Mixed and huge, mad and hoary,
Sudden, eternal, transitory,
A rage, a ruin and a glory—
In this thunder, in these flames,
Withered and passed the little aims;
The punctual pulse of day by day
Failed; and from me went away
Ambition, envy, honour, all

The stealth of love, the rise and fall
Of its obscure and delicate ways,
Doubt, desire, passion, praise,
The infinite gain, the countless cost,
Fallen and lost, fallen and lost !

* * * *

Well, here's our quiet room, and here
My pipe, my book, my glass of beer,
The usual known, the trivial true,
And opposite me, smiling, you
(You, in whose eyes the cosmos dances)
—Smiling at my silly fancies !

X

PASSION OF LOVE

THE things that I must love in you, my dear,
Have wrenched my heart to breaking.
Your spirit is all hope : mine is all fear
Before that idle music of your making.

We share the wind that makes the young leaves
chime
In silver shiver of song :
But friendly woods turn dark and harsh in time,
And, dear, the whole long summer is not long.

It is not death I fear for you at all ;
Whom the gods love, they save ;
Life, life it is that merits mutes and pall—
I think I could not grudge you to the grave.

If I could shield you? So the coward thought
Besets me unaware !
Ah, blame not me, but blame the dreams you
brought,
Blame your small hands, and blame your tangled
hair !

If I could shield you? Darling, who am I
To choose or wish for you
A scope less large than that infinity
Of what we others suffer, what we do?

You will forsake those laughing levels : here
Are effort, agony, loss,
Doubt and desire and failure, O my dear !—
The slope, the steep, the summit, and the Cross

XI

LOVE'S MADNESS

WELL, so it is : the thing I had
Was fit to make the world run mad :
It was a splendour so intense
It smote my sins to innocence,
And through men's mist of fears and lies
Clove one clear pathway to the skies.

Such was the race I might have run ;
Such was the palm I might have won ;
Such was the light, the flame, the flower :
And in a day and in an hour
I took it as not fit to take
And spent it for a woman's sake.

I cannot think she did not pay
The worth of any hour or day :
She could not know, she could not guess,
The world's loss or my loneliness,
But paid for all (O just and wise !)
With the least laughter of her eyes.

And if an angel came in tears
And proffered me my wasted years,
And spread before my feet anew
The race to run, the deed to do,
With all things sweet and all things strange
—I would not change, I would not change!

XII

FRUSTRATION

My Muse stopped singing, and I heard
A sorrow crying to-and-fro :
It cried upon me for a word,
It claimed the word I did not know :

It called quite dumbly, like a thing
That cannot teach its tongue to speak :
It was too strong for silencing,
And for the scope of sound too weak.

I fled the trouble of that cry ;
I found the stillest places out ;
I went where fields of folly lie
Beyond the dangerous breath of doubt.

My Muse went with me to that land
So still, where not a whisper stirs :
She held the silence in her hand,
And all the solitude was hers.

O song that songs of ours refuse,
And pain speech was not fashioned for !
Upon that hunger of my Muse
Not death itself shall shut the door.

XIII

DREAM

You came once when you were a child
 (I know it) to a lane of leaves
Where dark and light were reconciled;
 Where still, I know, the memory cleaves
Of young uncertainty, and doubt
 More sure than faith, and faith more sure
 Than any shadows that endure
Till light and dark are both put out.

To get their urgent legends told,
 The windy branches met and talked:
The spilt and scattered streams of gold
 That shook about you as you walked
Made trouble in your heart: you knew
 The past was scattered like the sun,
 And all the passion of things done
Ached in the dream of things to do.

Within that dream, more deep than deep,
 The stillness of your being knows
Such strong and secret guards as keep
 The holy places of repose.

Your world escapes our world's control :
I never touch you but I guess
The leafy lanes of quietness
And windless waters of the soul.

The windless pools, the branches strung
With silence as a harp with sound,
High passion lovely, lonely, young,
And wisdom fortunately found
—All these your look discerns, declares :
Thought is on fire to wing your dreams :
Your quiet conquers the extremes
Whose conquest all our noise prepares.

XIV

WHY should you fight against your fate?

Happy and young you are, and brave,
And still the moving stars debate

The brief location of your grave;
But the years change and the years fall
And one year you'll be nought at all.

You must be laid into the ground;

And find the place where—as *you* must—
Your brothers of the world have found

Silence and solitude and dust;
And yield your faculty of breath
To short contagion and long death.

Ah, not the less for that put on

The armour that you ought to wear!
For, when your friends and fights are gone,

The thing you fought for will be there:
Or, if it will not, still there's scope
For hoping in a forlorn hope.

Life can but promise you defeat,

And striving is the whole of strife,
And into death at last retreat

The onward-marching hosts of life.
'Tis well: we cannot choose but choose
The battle we are bound to lose.

MY LADY'S SONGS

I

SHE whom I love will sit apart,
And they whom love makes wise
May know the beauty in her heart
By the beauty in her eyes.

Thoughts that in quietness confute
The noisy world are hers,
Like music in a listening lute
Whose strings no finger stirs.

And in her eyes the shadows move,
Not glad nor sad, but strange
With those unchanging dreams that prove
The littleness of change.

II

Two seagulls flying
Alone and away,
Gold in the dying
Gold of the day,
Soon will turn silver, soon
Pass out of sight :
Silvered they'll be in the moon,
And sped in the night.

But never I hear
Music cry from the strings,
And never my dear
Sits by me and sings,
But I shut my eyes,
And the soul looks far,
And there, lost gold in golden skies,
My seagulls are.

How beauty, wondering, wakes,
Who knows, who knows?
For beauty the heart breaks
At the song's close.
Flashing, sailing, turning,
From all but themselves apart,
My gulls are flames burning
At beauty's heart.

III

I LOOKED for shells along the beach :
The beach was made of shells, so small
They seemed not to be shells at all,
But sand, but grains that each with each
Slipped through the fingers, mocked the eyes :
Lips, ripples, whorls, ribs, shadows, dyes,
Made the one colour of the beach.

You had your shells, and I meant mine
To be yours too, but could not tell
What fine faint radiance of what shell,
Where every shell shone faint and fine,
Would give you happiness that day :
And so I threw my shells away.
You had your shells—what need of mine?

IV

WHAT shall I bring my dear to show her dearness?
Not any good that by my hands is done!
Does the sky render to the stars its clearness,
Or summer give its ripeness to the sun?
Not love, to her who taught me all my loving,
Nor wisdom, to the wisest of the wise:
But secret shame I bring for her removing,
And my dark sin lay bare to her bright eyes.
So, in the end, where flower the tranquil faces,
Where shine the feet, of the enfranchised dead
—There, in the lyric heart-uplifting places
That ev'n on earth my dear inhabited—

She shall be friends with me, and speak me fair
—Who, but for her, should never have been there.

V

WITH heavy eyes I took myself to bed,
But just as sleep poised hovering, when it seemed
The pillows drowned the noises in my head,
And half I dreamed, and half I dreamed I dreamed,
A fear stood up between my dreams and me,
And cried, as something spent and frightened calls
From a dark covert or a misty sea,
With a sad cry flung round the sky's four walls :
And in my heart the cry dropped, whispering :
'The girl you love—the hands, the eyes, the hair—
The girl you love—the little lovely thing—
Suppose she dreamed of death, and you not there?
Suppose her dream came true, you out of sight?'
—And so sleep came not to me all that night.

VI

Out of my mind I went with grief,
But found a better place to be,
With clearer light on ling and leaf,
And tides that the bright moon set free.

The morning's horse with blazing hoof
Lit at one leap the whole world's floor :
No sky pressed on me like a roof,
And no horizon shut the door :

And all the noise of space and light
Was gathered in a little song :
A little bird just out of sight
Made singing of it all day long.

But now the pulse of music flags,
The skies close in, the light goes blind,
And some monotonous meaning drags
Me back into my proper mind.

VII

ENVOY

NOT mere concession, easy wealth,
Abundance, show God's might :
The stars, that do their work by stealth,
Are not for that less bright.

The liberal mountains, what are these
For meaning?—and the Muse
To that great welter of the seas
Has cried : 'Refuse, refuse !'

O silent voice of loudest choir !
The love made dim with day
Lifts in the blind face of desire
Her sacramental 'Nay !'

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